

Long Range Planning Community Committee Recommendations

The mission of Wadsworth Library is to provide a comfortable and welcoming place for the creation and encouragement of young readers; for access to the tools needed to find and evaluate the information you need; and to facilitate the discovery of materials that will stimulate your imagination.

The library has a new mission statement: The mission of Wadsworth Library is to provide our entire community with a welcoming, comfortable space that facilitates a love of learning and reading; to provide opportunities for connections within the community, and discovery of new interests and ideas; to be an inclusive community center that provides open access to resources, materials, and space.

Committee members:

Rachel Bailey Jones (Facilitator), Brandon West (Zoom master, note taker), Mark Sullivan (Board member), Debby Emerson (current Library Director), Anna Grace (past Library Director), Matthew Mallaber, Marilyn Curley, Meredith Drake, Colleen Powers, Kay Sheffield, Grayce McLaughlin, Alex McLean

Prologue: As a group of community members, we began our conversations about Long Range Planning for Wadsworth Library with a foundation of admiration and respect for the highly dedicated staff and Library Board. The library serves our community in important and meaningful ways that enrich our lives. The recommendations for Long Range Planning are meant to build upon this very strong foundation and are presented in a spirit of support and enthusiasm for what is and what could be for our very strong and beautifully renovated Wadsworth Library.

Area #1: Build Collaborations & Advocacy – GOAL: Support existing connections, build additional partnerships, and advocate for the mission of the library in the community.

- **Action:** The library will partner with the Livingston County Office for the Aging to develop special services for seniors. - **we are currently doing a second round of yoga classes, which are HIGHLY popular. We included the Office for the Aging in our planning for our first Casual Conversation which took place in Fall 2021. At that event we discussed what seniors would like to see in our community. We were pleased to have three local elected officials attend our event. They said they found it very helpful to hear directly from people in the community, and asked to be included in future events we might have.**

- **Action:** The library will explore a live chat feature for its website, and capitalize on the use of freely available tools such as Facebook Messenger to communicate with users in real time. – we do use messenger; users often send us messages and both Sarah and I are notified when a message comes in. There is an automated response from Messenger to the patron, and then either Sarah or I will answer them directly.
- **Action** The library will reach out to area service organizations such as Kiwanis and Rotary to establish partnerships and investigate collaborative projects. – I am a member of Geneseo Rotary and do my best to represent the library. Rotary has made a donation to OWWL Library System’s Great Give Back campaign to purchase supplies for classroom teachers. One of the officers of our Friends of Wadsworth Library group is a Kiwanis member, and has reached out to Kiwanis to ask for support for Friends’ fundraising efforts. Kiwanis has made a generous donation to support Friends’ basket raffles.
- **Action** The library will continue and expand its collaboration with SUNY Geneseo, specifically working with Milne Library’s Community Engagement Librarian on joint programs. – I have had a few meetings with Geneseo’s new Community Engagement Librarian. She has recently returned from maternity leave so we will be meeting again soon. We do have individual projects with students. Sarah has recently had a student who volunteered to do a children’s program, and we have an arrangement in place with a faculty member for students who want to do a practicum in the library. In the past couple years we have served as a case study for a communications class that has to create a marketing plan. I think this has been helpful for the students, and also for the library as we have learned something about how this age group sees us and how they like to communicate.
- **Action:** The library will continue to use social media to promote awareness of library activities, and will reevaluate its social media strategy on an annual basis. – the library has really stepped up the use of social media in the past 2 years. Our Outreach Coordinator (Brandy) and our Children’s Librarian (Sarah) meet regularly to plan posts to the library Facebook and Instagram accounts, and Brandy is responsible for the library’s web page. We monitor the level of engagement we get with our Facebook posts and it is steadily increasing.
- **Action:** The library will explore the possibility of purchasing the house next to the library driveway, if the present owner decides to put it on the market. The existing building could be removed to make way for additional parking and improved egress from the parking lot.

Area #2: Enrich the library's role as a Community Center – GOAL: Build on the library's strength as a vital part of the social fabric of the broad community served by the library.

- **Action:** Develop an online registration system for reservation of the library's meeting rooms and market the availability of space for community events – this has been done and it is highly successful. People also register online for library programs and this was absolutely a move in the right direction. The system we use is expensive and has a steep learning curve, but both Sarah and Brandy were determined to make it work and it is well worth both the expense and the time and effort. This is what people expect today, and we are meeting their needs.
- **Action:** The Library director and other library staff are involved with key community partners such as schools, service groups, local businesses and civic organizations. – Sarah has a good working relationship with the local school. She is present at the kindergarten orientation sessions at the school to talk about our public library. Although it has become increasingly difficult for school groups to make field trips, we do get an annual visit from the school's ESL students. We also have frequent visits from local preschool programs. Brandy works with several local businesses to arrange for programs or to get support for programs. For example, the arrangement for our Fall series of yoga classes was a result of working with the Office for the Aging. I am a member of Geneseo Rotary and a Friends' board member belongs to Kiwanis.
- **Action:** Foster civic engagement by offering opportunities for discussion of current social and political issues. – the library was fortunate to get a grant from the American Library Association to do just that. We held our first "Casual Conversation" in October 2021 and a second one in July 2022. Both were attended by local elected officials (or their representatives) as well as members of the public. The first conversation focused on adults 55+ in our community, and what they would like to see in the community. The second focused on mental health, and more specifically suicide prevention and what services are available for a person in crisis.
- **Action:** Work consistently to keep the library environment comfortable, clean, safe, and welcoming. – this is ongoing. Cleaning is not an issue as we have an outstanding cleaner who is reliable and easy to work with. We try to provide a welcoming space and recently purchased some new furniture for our main floor to make it more attractive and better reflect how people want to use our space (2 small tables rather than 1 large table; chairs for people to sit and read the newspaper or a magazine). Staff in the children's room are constantly picking up and cleaning toys that have been handled by kids.
- **Action:** The library will have a presence at selected community events and festivals. – we will be present at SUNY Geneseo's Volunteer Fair. Although we don't currently use a lot of volunteers, I think this is good exposure for the library. We have participated in a

couple of the Geneseo Main Street efforts (thanks to former board member Marcia Podhorecki for giving us space on front of her business) and we will be part of the upcoming Scarecrow Festival. We did not have a presence at the Geneseo Summer Festival and I think we should. We need to figure out what we might do.

Area #3: Stimulate imagination at all age levels – GOAL: Enrich library offerings by expanding the resources available for the community to utilize. **GOAL:** Offer library programming for children, teens, adults, seniors, and multi-generational programs that challenge traditional thinking and encourage discussion, while providing entertainment.

- **Action:** The library will broaden the scope of the library's collections by identifying non-traditional, loanable items that are of interest to the community and adding these items to circulating collections. – Sarah has added VOX books to the children's collection. We have talked about establishing a seed library but there does not seem to be enough interest. We have added board games to our circulating collection but they are not hugely popular. We have 9 mobile hotspots that are almost always all signed out; we could probably use more. During the state park season, our Empire passes are also very popular and always signed out. We have had people ask about circulating previously enjoyed jigsaw puzzles, and while we have not officially added them to our collection we are doing a puzzle exchange. Bring in a puzzle you have completed, and take a puzzle home with you.
- **Action:** The library will expand adult programming to include new formats and delivery methods. – adult programming has grown by leaps and bounds since we have had Brandy on board. We did a lot of virtual programming during COVID, but people prefer in-person programs for the most part. The one exception is our book club, which went virtual during COVID and most of the participants want to stay virtual. It is just easier and more convenient for them. Our club now meets in a hybrid format with most people attending virtually, but those who want to come to the library to participate. We have a good mix of craft programs (which people love), informational session and entertainment offerings.
- **Action:** The library will create a service plan for teens, including the new area, collections and programming. – the library's teen advisory board, coordinated by Sarah and Brandy, is active and meets regularly. They plan activities and events, and even help decide on the décor for the teen area. We have been gratified to see that our core group of teens has recruited a couple of new people for the group!
- **Action:** The library will develop an interpretive trail at the library-owned Grove property along Temple Hill, after investigating requirements for such a project.

Area #4: Provide Inclusive Services to All Constituencies – GOAL: Continue and expand inclusive practices in service to children, young adults, adults, seniors, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ Community, SUNY Community, and all residents of the library's service area.

- **Action:** The library will have a tech tutor available, by appointment, on a regular schedule. – thanks to a grant from the OWWL Library System, the tech tutor program is back. The Tech Tutor has regularly scheduled times once a month at each library in Livingston County. We will have expended all the funding in this grant sometime in 2023, so then we will hopefully apply for another grant or find a way to continue the service on our own. We do have a part time staff member who is very good at helping people with technology, and he is willing to make appointments with users who need assistance.
- **Action:** The library will partner with Pioneer Library System and area libraries used by residents of the town of York and other unserved communities to explore possibilities for receiving funding from those communities. – we have not focused much on this area. Eliminating unserved areas is also a goal of OWWL Library System so we could work with them to figure out how to approach this. It is a tough sell because we would be asking the residents of the town of York to agree to tax themselves to pay for our library. This would have to go to a public vote and would require a lot of promotion and education.
- **Action:** Review children's programming annually and adjust as needed to meet the changing needs of users. – Sarah does this on a regular basis. Many changes were made in response to COVID-19; some of those have stayed in place while other restrictions have been lifted.
- **Action:** The library will continue to enhance its excellent print and electronic collections, with a focus on diversity, early literacy, and resources for seniors. – this is something we do consistently. Electronic collections became more important during COVID, and we added the hoopla service and made a larger contribution to the OWWL2Go collection. Sarah has added VOX books to the children's collection and we are purchasing fewer children's audio books. We have 2 "standing order" plans for large print books because they are in high demand.
- **Action:** The library will investigate services needed by diverse constituencies, and where there are gaps, the library will try to provide those services or partner with other organizations to provide those services. – we are always listening to our users and trying to make sure we are giving them what they need. Our small business area is a good example of this. Staff were spending a lot of time helping users with the public printer and a fax/scanner we had set up for public use. Neither of these 2 machines was

designed for heavy use, so we leased a Toshiba machine for the public use area that serves as a printer for the public computers, a copier, a fax machine and a scanner. It is also capable of printing from a user's phone, a service which is in high demand. This feature does not work for everyone but it is at least a step in the right direction, and people appreciate the fact that we're trying to meet their needs.